



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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Director

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TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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for
RJB*

REPORT BACK ON ELECTRONIC PERMITTING & INSPECTIONS SYSTEM REVIEW TIME REDUCTION AND BUSINESS AND RESIDENT COST REDUCTIONS

On April 15, 2014, the Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) to report back on how the County's proposed electronic permitting solutions will reduce departmental staff review time and how cost reductions will be passed on to the businesses and residents paying for the permits. The directive was given as part of a larger discussion on Item No 50: the Chief Executive Officer's recommendations related to the FY 2014-15 Recommended Budget. DRP has worked closely with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Chief Executive Office (CEO) in the development of this report.

Background

In October 2013, DRP issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), to solicit proposals for the licensing and implementation of a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) electronic permitting system that will support the County's current and future requirements, and which increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the DRP's entitlement, permitting, inspection, enforcement, and other land management functions. Through the RFP process, DRP selected a company that can deliver the appropriate system and is currently working through contract negotiations. DRP anticipates having this contract before your Board in June 2014. If your Board recommends contract award, DRP will initiate the project immediately following Board approval. Project implementation is anticipated by late FY 2014-15.

Potential for Reduced Review Time

The new proposed system, Electronic Permitting & Inspections – County of Los Angeles (EPIC-LA), will support a comprehensive approach to land entitlement, inspections and code enforcement while facilitating integration with the land entitlement departments' electronic plan review process. All application materials will be filed electronically and routed to the appropriate reviewing sections in each department. When the reviewing section determines that the information filed is incorrect or incomplete, the system will automatically notify the applicant and allow for the additional information to be submitted electronically, directly into

the case file. This approach has the potential to save the applicant time by eliminating much back-and-forth correspondence that occurs today between the applicant, DRP, DPW, the Department of Parks and Recreation, Fire Department and the Department of Public Health as each case is reviewed. Furthermore, EPIC-LA will track the actual review and case processing time so that if a case is delayed for weeks or months due to missing information, the system will show the reason and length of delay.

EPIC-LA will also enhance customer service by providing a user-friendly website where customers will be able to access, most, if not all information they need related to the County's permitting process. For example, a customer will be able to track the balance of a trust account for the processing of a tentative map without having to call a staff person to conduct research and return a phone call. The implementation of an electronic dashboard will provide further potential for reduced review times by providing better accountability of actual vs. expected case processing times.

Potential Cost Reductions

The majority of cost savings will be realized on the applicants' side. The savings is primarily from the cost of reproducing paper plans for review and approval and also the travel time coupled with elimination of the need to physically submit and pick up documents in person. EPIC-LA will allow applicants or their consultant to electronically submit their applications, forms and plans, reducing the cost relating to application submittal.

Cost savings may occur on the County side of the permit process as well. Process changes due to the implementation of EPIC-LA have the potential to reduce costs by becoming more efficient. To fully capture these changes, DRP will conduct a fee study that will span from pre-through post-implementation of EPIC-LA. The study will consider actual County costs, in consideration of other recent case processing changes, and determine if any savings will result. The fee study will also evaluate administrative costs associated with processing applications such as oak tree permits, conditional use permits, subdivision projects and a handful of other project types.

If you have any questions regarding DRP's electronic permitting implementation, please contact me or Dennis Slavin, Chief Deputy, at (213) 974-6405 or by email at dslavin@planning.lacounty.gov.

RJB:DLS

c: Chief Executive Office
Chief Information Office
Fire Department
Department of Parks & Recreation
Department of Public Works
Department of Public Health